

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 2, 13, 15, 26, 27 and 29, cancel claims 25 and 28 and add claims 30 and 31. Following entry of the amendments in this Amendment, the pending claims in the present application read as follows:

- 1 1. (Currently Amended) A system for facilitating the alignment of a
2 hitching mechanism located on a vehicle with a mating hitching
3 mechanism located on an object to be removably connected to the vehicle,
4 said system comprising:
5 a target area located on the object to be removably connected to the
6 vehicle, said target area having an alignment indicia located thereupon,
7 said target area facing the vehicle when the object to be removably
8 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle;
9 a video camera for installation in a fixed position on the vehicle,
10 said video camera being oriented with a lens of said video camera facing
11 toward said alignment indicia located on said target area, directly in a
12 generally straight and level manner at substantially the same height with
13 respect to ground as is the alignment indicia on the object to be removably
14 ~~connected to the vehicle~~ when the object to be removably connected to the
15 vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle; and
16 a video monitor for placement in the passenger compartment of said
17 vehicle in a position in which it may be viewed by a driver of the vehicle,
18 said video monitor for displaying thereon an image viewed by said video
19 camera.

1 2. (Currently Amended) A system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said
2 target area comprises:

3 a surface located on the object to be removably connected to the
4 vehicle, said surface facing said vehicle when the object to be removably
5 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle; and

6 ~~an~~ said alignment indicia located on said surface in a position in
7 which said alignment indicia will be at the center of said image when the
8 object to be removably connected to the vehicle is in position for
9 connection to the vehicle.

1 3. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 2, wherein said alignment
2 indicia comprises:

3 at least two intersecting lines, the intersection between said at least
4 two intersecting lines being at the center of said image when the object to
5 be removably connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the
6 vehicle.

1 4. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 2, wherein said alignment
2 indicia is of a color which offers a high degree of contrast with a color of
3 said surface located on the object to be removably connected to the
4 vehicle.

1 5. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 2, wherein said surface is
2 located on the object to be removably connected to the vehicle in a position
3 which will be near to said video camera when the object to be removably
4 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle.

1 6. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said video
2 camera is hermetically sealed to protect it from the elements.

1 7. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, additionally comprising:
2 a wiring harness, said wiring harness connecting said video camera
3 to said video monitor, said wiring harness also connecting both said video
4 camera and said video monitor to a source of power.

1 8. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said video
2 camera comprises:
3 a wireless transmitter for transmitting video signals;
4 and wherein said video monitor comprises:
5 a wireless receiver for receiving said video signals from said
6 wireless transmitter.

1 9. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 8, wherein said video
2 monitor additionally comprises:
3 a wireless transmitter for sending a signal to turn on said video
4 camera;
5 and wherein said video camera additionally comprises:
6 a wireless receiver for receiving said signal to turn on said video
7 camera.

1 10. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 8, wherein said video
2 camera additionally comprises:
3 a battery for supplying power to said video camera.

1 11. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said video
2 monitor is mounted on or in a dash located in said passenger compartment
3 of said vehicle.

1 12. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, wherein said video
2 monitor comprises either a CRT display or an LCD video display.

1 13. (Currently Amended) A system ~~as defined in Claim 1, for~~
2 facilitating the alignment of a hitching mechanism located on a vehicle
3 with a mating hitching mechanism located on an object to be removably
4 connected to the vehicle, said system comprising:
5 a target area located on the object to be removably connected to the
6 vehicle, said target area facing the vehicle when the object to be removably
7 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle;
8 a video camera for installation in a fixed position on the vehicle,
9 said video camera being oriented toward said target area on the object to be
10 removably connected to the vehicle when the object to be removably
11 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle; and
12 a video monitor for placement in the passenger compartment of said
13 vehicle in a position in which it may be viewed by a driver of the vehicle,
14 said video monitor for displaying thereon an image viewed by said video
15 camera,
16 wherein the hitching mechanism located on the vehicle is mounted at the
17 front of the vehicle, and wherein the object to be removably connected to
18 the vehicle ~~comprises~~ is an implement.

1 14. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 13, wherein said
2 implement comprises:

3 a snow plow.

1 15. (Currently Amended) A system as defined in Claim 14 [[1]],
2 wherein the hitching mechanism located on the vehicle comprises:
3 a hitch frame nose piece that is mounted at the front of the vehicle;
4 and ~~wherein the object to be removably connected to the vehicle~~
5 ~~comprises a snow plow~~ wherein said target area is located on said snow
6 plow.

1 16. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 15, wherein said video
2 camera is mounted on said hitch frame nose piece.

1 17. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 15, wherein said target
2 area is located on the hitching mechanism on said snow plow.

1 18. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, wherein the hitching
2 mechanism located on the vehicle comprises:
3 a trailer hitch which is mounted at the rear of the vehicle;
4 wherein the object to be removably connected to the vehicle comprises:
5 a trailer, wherein said target area is located on said trailer.

1 19. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 18, wherein said video
2 camera is mounted close adjacent to said trailer hitch.

1 20. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 19, wherein said hitching
2 mechanism on said trailer is located at the front end thereof, and wherein
3 said target area is located near the front end of the trailer relatively close to
4 the hitching mechanism at the front thereof.

1 21. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 1, additionally comprising:
2 a sensor for sensing the distance between the object to be removably
3 connected to the vehicle and the vehicle;
4 wherein the distance between the object to be removably connected to the
5 vehicle and the vehicle is displayed on said video monitor.

1 22. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 21, wherein said distance
2 sensor comprises:
3 a transmitter of a communication wave; and
4 a receiver of reflections of said transmitted wave.

1 23. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 22, wherein said
2 communications medium is infrared waves.

1 24. (Original) A system as defined in Claim 22, wherein said
2 communications medium is ultrasonic radio frequency (RF) waves.

1 25. (Cancelled).

1 26. (Currently Amended) A system for facilitating the alignment of a
2 hitching mechanism located on a vehicle with a mating hitching
3 mechanism located on an object to be removably connected to the vehicle,
4 said system comprising:

5 a video camera for installation in a fixed position on one of the
6 vehicle and the object to be removably connected to the vehicle;
7 a target area located on the other of the vehicle and the object to be
8 removably connected to the vehicle, said target area having an alignment
9 indicia located thereupon, said target area facing one of the vehicle and the

10 object to be removably connected to the vehicle when the object to be
11 removably connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the
12 vehicle, said video camera being oriented with a lens of said video camera
13 facing toward said alignment indicia on said target area, ~~on the other of the~~
14 ~~vehicle and the object to be removably connected to the vehicle directly in~~
15 a generally straight and level manner at substantially the same height with
16 respect to ground as is the alignment indicia when the object to be
17 removably connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the
18 vehicle; and

19 a video monitor for placement in the passenger compartment of said
20 vehicle in a position in which it may be viewed by a driver of the vehicle,
21 said video monitor for displaying thereon an image viewed by said video
22 camera.

1 27. (Currently Amended) A system for facilitating the alignment of a
2 hitching mechanism located on a vehicle with a mating hitching
3 mechanism located on an object to be removably connected to the vehicle,
4 said system comprising:

5 a target area located on the object to be removably connected to the
6 vehicle, said target area facing the vehicle when the object to be removably
7 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle, said
8 target area having an alignment indicia located thereupon;

9 a video camera for installation in a fixed position on the vehicle,
10 said video camera being oriented with a lens of said video camera facing
11 ~~directly toward~~ said alignment indicia on said target area on the object to
12 be removably connected to the vehicle, directly in a generally straight and
13 level manner at substantially the same height with respect to ground as is

14 the alignment indicia when the object is in position for connection to the
15 vehicle; and
16 a video monitor for mounting in the passenger compartment of said
17 vehicle in a position in which it may be viewed by a driver of the vehicle,
18 said video monitor for displaying thereon an image viewed by said video
19 camera.

1 28. (Cancelled).

1 29. (Currently Amended) A method of facilitating the alignment of a
2 hitching mechanism located on a vehicle with a mating hitching
3 mechanism located on an object to be removably connected to the vehicle,
4 said method comprising:

5 providing a target area on the object to be removably connected to
6 the vehicle, said target area facing the vehicle when the object to be
7 removably connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the
8 vehicle;

9 providing an alignment indicia on said target area;
10 installing a video camera in a fixed position on the vehicle,
11 orienting said video camera with a lens of said video camera facing
12 ~~being oriented toward~~ the alignment indicia on said target area, directly in
13 a generally straight and level manner at substantially the same height with
14 respect to ground as is the alignment indicia on the object to be removably
15 ~~connected to the vehicle~~ when the object is in position for connection to
16 the vehicle; and

17 displaying an image viewed by said video camera on a video
18 monitor located in the passenger compartment of said vehicle in a position
19 in which it may be viewed by a driver of the vehicle.

1 30. (New) A system for facilitating the alignment of a hitching
2 mechanism located on a vehicle with a mating hitching mechanism located
3 on an object to be removably connected to the vehicle, said system
4 comprising:

5 a target area located on the object to be removably connected to the
6 vehicle, said target area facing the vehicle when the object to be removably
7 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle;

8 a video camera for installation in a fixed position on the vehicle,
9 said video camera being oriented toward said target area on the object to be
10 removably connected to the vehicle when the object to be removably
11 connected to the vehicle is in position for connection to the vehicle, said
12 video camera including a wireless transmitter for transmitting video
13 signals; and

14 a video monitor for placement in the passenger compartment of said
15 vehicle in a position in which it may be viewed by a driver of the vehicle,
16 said video monitor for displaying thereon an image viewed by said video
17 camera, said video monitor including a wireless receiver for receiving said
18 video signals from said wireless transmitter.

1 31. (New) A system as defined in Claim 30, wherein said video
2 monitor additionally comprises:

3 a wireless transmitter for sending a signal to turn on said video
4 camera;

- 5 and wherein said video camera additionally comprises:
6 a wireless receiver for receiving said signal to turn on said video
7 camera.